

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ANKARA 04426 01 OF 02 130852Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2289
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 4426

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, TU, UR
SUBJECT: POLITICAL TRENDS ANALYSIS: PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT'S
PROSPECTIVE VISIT TO SOVIET UNION

SUMMARY. ECEVIT'S UPCOMING VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION GIVES HIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SMALL GAINS IN TURKISH-SOVIET RELATIONS AND, IN PART, TO BALANCE THE EFFORT FOR REVITALIZATION OF TURKEY'S WESTERN TIES. THE TIMING MAY BE AWKWARD AS REGARDS CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THE EMBARGO, AND NEGOTIATING A POLITICAL DOCUMENT WILL BE A TOUGH TEST. IN THE END WE THINK TURKISH-SOVIET RELATIONS PROBABLY WILL BE ADVANCED SOMEWHAT, AND ECEVIT WILL PROBABLY AVOID DOING ANYTHING THAT MIGHT COMPROMISE TURKEY'S CASE IN CONGRESS OR TURKEY'S POSITION IN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS TELEGRAM IDENTIFIES SOME OF THE OPPORTUNITIES
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PAGE 02 ANKARA 04426 01 OF 02 130852Z

AND DIFFICULTIES FACING TURKISH PRIME MINISTER BULENT ECEVIT AS HE PREPARES FOR HIS VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION JUNE 21-25 AND REVIEWS PROSPECTS FOR THE VISIT.

2. AMONG THE BROAD OPPORTUNITIES ARE:
A. A CHANCE TO PURSUE HIS STATED POLICY OF EXPANDING TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.

DURING HIS NEARLY SIX MONTHS IN OFFICE, ECEVIT HAS VISITED BULGARIA AND YUGOSLAVIA AND HAS PLAYED HOST TO A VISIT BY ROMANIAN PRIME MINISTER MANESCU. THE VISIT OF THE TURKISH PRIME MINISTER TO THE SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN PENDING FOR SEVERAL YEARS. ECEVIT'S PREDECESSOR, SULEYMAN DEMIREL, FIRST AGREED TO THE VISIT IN RESPONSE TO A VISIT OF SOVIET PRIME MINISTER KOSYGIN IN DECEMBER 1975, BUT DEMIREL'S POLITICAL POSITION WAS NEVER STRONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO MAKE THE TRIP. A VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION BY FOREIGN MINISTER CAGLAYANGIL IN THE SPRING OF 1977 WAS A TEMPORIZING SUBSTITUTE.

B. A CHANCE TO PURSUE THE SPECIFIC POLICY GOAL OF ALL RECENT TURKISH GOVERNMENTS OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE NEIGHBORING SUPERPOWER AND POTENTIAL ADVERSARY, PRIMARILY ON ECONOMIC MATTERS AND REGIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES. TURKEY AND THE USSR HAVE HAD AN ACTIVE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP FOR SEVERAL YEARS, BUT TURKEY HAS LAGGED BEHIND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE IN DEVELOPING POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

C. A CHANCE TO SEEK FURTHER SOVIET COMMITMENTS FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

D. A CHANCE TO MOLLIFY THE LEFT WING OF HIS REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY AS WELL AS ORTHODOX LEFTISTS OUTSIDE THE PARTY. THESE SUPPORTERS REMAIN AN IMPORTANT PART OF ECEVIT'S POLITICAL BASE, BUT THEY WERE DISCONCERTED BY THE WARMTH OF ECEVIT'S RECEPTION IN WASHINGTON--AND EVEN MORE SO BY HIS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ANKARA 04426 01 OF 02 130852Z

APPARENTLY WARM RESPONSE.

3. AMONG THE DIFFICULTIES POSED BY THE VISIT ARE:

A. TIMING. IN TERMS OF THE EFFORT TO REPEAL THE EMBARGO, THE TIMING OF THE VISIT IS AWKWARD. ECEVIT HAD PLANNED IT TO COME ON THE HEELS OF HIS VISIT TO THE U.S. AND THE REAFFIRMATION OF TURKEY'S TIES WITH THE WEST. HE WAS UNABLE TO FORESEE THAT IT WOULD ALSO COME JUST BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL VOTE ON THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO. ON THE ONE HAND, HE PRESUMABLY WILL WANT TO BALANCE SOMEWHAT THE EFFORT FOR REVITALIZATION OF TURKEY'S WESTERN TIES BY A SHOW OF IMPROVEMENT IN TURKISH-SOVIET RELATIONS, BUT ON THE OTHER, HE WILL NEED TO BE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL NOT TO DAMAGE THE PROSPECTS FOR A POSITIVE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THE EMBARGO QUESTION. THE TIMING IS ALSO SLIGHTLY COMPLICATED BY THE CURRENT VISIT OF CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG HUA, ONLY A WEEK BEFORE ECEVIT'S ARRIVAL IN MOSCOW. ECEVIT MADE IT CLEAR IN SPEAKING TO JOURNALISTS JUNE 8, HOWEVER, THAT HUANG HUA'S VISIT RESULTS FROM A CHINESE INITIATIVE AND THAT TURKEY DOES NOT SEE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN HIS VISIT AND ECEVIT'S VISIT TO MOSCOW. (IT SEEMS UNLIKELY, BUT IF ECEVIT COULD FIND A LEGITIMATE EXCUSE, WE SUSPECT HE

WOULD DELAY HIS VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION UNTIL LATE SUMMER.)

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 04426 02 OF 02 130909Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ANKARA 4426

B. THE COMMITMENT TO SIGN A POLITICAL DOCUMENT. DURING KOSYGIN'S 1975 VISIT, THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT UNDERTOOK A COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATE AND SIGN A POLITICAL DOCUMENT DURING A FUTURE HIGH LEVEL VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION. THAT COMMITMENT WAS RENEWED AT THE CONCLUSION OF FOREIGN MINISTER CAGLAYANGIL'S VISIT IN SPRING OF 1977. WHILE NEGOTIATING SUCH A DOCUMENT DOES OFFER ECEVIT THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE TURKISH-SOVIET RELATIONS THE APPEARANCE OF BEING ON A NEW AND IMPROVED FOOTING, NEGOTIATING IT AT THIS TIME IS LIKELY TO BE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT. THE TURKS EXPECT THE SOVIET UNION TO BE VIRTUALLY UNYIELDING. NEVERTHELESS, THE GOT'S POSITION HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED BY THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO WORK FOR LIFTING THE EMBARGO, AND FROM WHAT WE KNOW OF GOT INTENTIONS, WE SEE VERY LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE TURKS WILL GO SO FAR AS TO AGREE TO DOCUMENT WHICH COULD BE DESCRIBED (AS THE SOVIETS WOULD APPARENTLY LIKE IT) AS A NON-AGGRESSION PACT. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 8,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ANKARA 04426 02 OF 02 130909Z

ECEVIT TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY, WHILE ANSWERING A QUESTION ABOUT A PROPOSED NON-AGGRESSION PACT WITH GREECE, TO SAY THAT HE SAW NO NEED FOR THE SUBJECT OF NON-AGGRESSION TO BE MENTIONED IN THE POLITICAL DOCUMENT TO BE SIGNED WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

4. THE PROSPECTS ARE GOOD FOR A MODESTLY SUCCESSFUL VISIT. IF ECEVIT HANDLES IT WELL, THE VISIT COULD OFFSET HIS U.S. VISIT ENOUGH TO REDUCE THE DISSATISFACTION OF THE EXTREME LEFT WHILE NOT GIVING THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION GROUNDS FOR ACCUSING HIM OF EXCESSIVE FRIENDLINESS TOWARD THE SOVIETS. HE MAY ALSO BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE SOME LIMITED FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES, BUT TURKISH NATIONAL INTERESTS REQUIRE THAT ECEVIT DEAL WITH THIS NEIGHBORING SUPERPOWER WITH GREAT CAUTION. THEY SIMILARLY REQUIRE THAT HE NOT DO ANYTHING AT THIS POINT THAT WOULD DAMAGE CHANCES FOR FAVORABLE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON LIFTING THE EMBARGO. FINALLY, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY MOST OF THE TURKISH PUBLIC SUPPORTS HIS DESIRE TO CATCH UP WITH THE PACE OF DETENTE, IT PROBABLY WOULD NOT SANCTION HIS GETTING OUT AHEAD OF THE REST OF THE ALLIES. WE THEREFORE EXPECT THAT ECEVIT'S VISIT WILL BE LONG ON PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF TURKISH-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP BUT SHORT ON SUBSTANCE. ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO JUDGE HOW THE SOVIET LEADERS WILL RESPOND TO ECEVIT'S NECESSARY CAUTION, WE SUSPECT THEY WILL PUSH FAIRLY HARD. IF THEY DO NOT OVERDO IT AND EMBARRASS HIM, ECEVIT WILL PROBABLY ACCOMPLISH WHAT SEEM TO US TO BE BASIC AIMS: A) IMPROVING ANKARA'S RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW, PERHAPS INCLUDING NEW ECONOMIC AID COMMITMENTS; B) MOLLIFYING THE LEFT WING OF HIS OWN PARTY AND ORTHODOX LEFTISTS OUTSIDE HIS PARTY; AND C) AVOIDING TAKING ANY STEPS OR MAKING ANY COMMITMENTS WHICH WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH TURKEY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE.

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PAGE 03 ANKARA 04426 02 OF 02 130909Z

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